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HENRY RHODEN: My name is Henry Rhoden. By

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7 profession I am a professional geologist. I have worked
8 for the last 40-odd years in the mining industry, some of
9 it in the uranium mining industry. I am familiar,
10 therefore, with radioactivity and its dangers and its
11 benefits in the case of nuclear power.

12 I have been to Yucca Mountain on a guided
13 tour for geologists only, not on the standard tourist
14 visit, but guided for senior professional geologists. I
15 have examined core from the bores. I have read many of
16 the reports. It seems to me, as a professional
17 geologist, that clearly no site in the country is ideal
18 and perhaps no site in the world is ideal, but Yucca
19 Mountain has more benefits than most, probably any other
20 site in the country.

21 The rock in which the tomb will be situated
22 is an ideal rock should there ever be any nuclear or
23 radioactivity escape. It is high above the water table,
24 it is deep underground. It is very unlikely that any
25 radioactivity can escape either upwards or downwards into

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1 the water table.

2 It is not like the hydrogen bombs and the
3 uranium bombs that have been exploded underground nearby.

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4 Those were exploded without any protection, completely
5 deeply underground, often below the water table and
6 obviously without any protection, and yet the
7 radioactivity from those has spread out a very, very
8 short distance, measured in a few hundred yards.

9 What we are looking at in Yucca Mountain are
10 carefully engineered coffins made of many materials,
11 including steel, zirconium and other materials which will
12 absorb radioactivity. They are so placed that the heat
13 will be dissipated.

14 I believe, like the speaker, not the last
15 speaker, but the speaker before last whose name I've
16 forgotten, spoke very clearly of the benefits to the
17 country. Nuclear power produces no carbon dioxide and,
18 therefore, doesn't help global warming. The only problem
19 with nuclear power is the danger, of course, of something
20 like Chernoble, the Russian disaster, but that was
21 because the whole power station was badly built, badly
22 engineered, badly designed, badly run, badly maintained.
23 The Three Mile Island accident that occurred in the
24 United States killed nobody. It was serious, but
25 everyone has lived.

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1 Obviously a new technology usually does have
2 its problems. I am in favor, therefore, that the country
3 should use more nuclear power to generate baseload
4 electricity, and if we're going to have nuclear power,
5 then of course we need a safe nuclear tomb, and Yucca
6 Mountain provides possibly not the ideal site, but an
7 excellent site for long-term burial of nuclear waste
8 where it will never endanger the population.

9 The last speaker who said that there could be
10 a Richter 8 earthquake in that area, of course you can
11 have an earthquake anywhere, you can have an earthquake
12 in the middle of Reno. There are small earthquakes every
13 day in Reno, but the chances of having a major earthquake
14 at Yucca Mountain are not very high. Even if they're
15 small earthquakes, then it would not affect the coffins,
16 which would basically roll like ball bearings, even
17 supposing a geological fault went right through one of
18 the tunnels where nuclear material had been buried.

19 As it is, where the faults actually exist in
20 Yucca Mountain has been mapped, it's been determined.
21 The actual coffins themselves will be put not where there
22 is an immediate fault line. If there is an earthquake,
23 there will be movement on existing faults.

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24 People have also said that there's a danger
25 of volcanic activity, but if there is some volcanic

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1 activity -- first of all, the volcanism in the area seems
2 to be dead. Even if it isn't, the chances of it
3 interfering with the nuclear tomb is extremely small.

4 Again, even if it did erupt through one of
5 the places where the nuclear tomb is developed, then it
6 wouldn't cause serious damage to the surrounding area.
7 There is no population in the immediate area, and,
8 therefore, there is no immediate threat.

9 Therefore, I would like to express my opinion
10 that Yucca Mountain is an excellent site for a nuclear
11 tomb, and since the United States cannot say, well, not
12 in my backyard in all 50 states, it has to be somewhere,
13 and therefore Yucca Mountain is as good a site, not only
14 that exists, but is as good a site that you're ever
15 likely to find. I am, therefore, in favor of supporting
16 the government's efforts to do the appropriate scientific
17 and engineering research necessary to demonstrate that
18 Yucca Mountain would be a good site.

[Other commenters spoke, then Mr. Rhoden spoke again.]

HENRY RHODEN: My name is Henry Rhoden. I

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20 represent myself. I'm a resident in Nevada, and I've
21 worked in many places in Nevada. Otherwise I don't
22 represent anybody. You might say I represent the
23 scientific community rather than -- more than the
24 emotional community.

25 Two things that people have mentioned before.

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1 First of all, the transport. Of course, there is always
2 a slight danger of transporting nuclear waste, but how do
3 people think that the material for nearly 1,000 hydrogen
4 and uranium bonds that have been exploded in the Yucca
5 Mountain area in the nuclear site. How did that material
6 come there? Admittedly, the actual bombs themselves were
7 put together, were finally assembled at the nuclear site,
8 but nevertheless, all the material, without exception,
9 came from somewhere else, either by rail or by road, and
10 as far as I know, there's been no accidents historically
11 since about the 1950s when the first hydrogen and nuclear
12 bombs were exploded in that area.

13 So natural transport of this material is
14 going to be done even much more safely than it was when
15 they were bringing material for the nuclear bombs, but if
16 the worse comes to the worst, one could always fly it in.

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17 Okay. You say, well, the plane might crash, but then the
18 nuclear coffins themselves have been demonstrated to be
19 crash-proof. There's massive steel. A plane might
20 crash, but the nuclear coffin itself would not break, if
21 you could fly it, but it is far better to have the
22 nuclear waste in one place buried deeply underground than
23 in the hundred or so pools. I believe it's about 110
24 pools. Somebody may correct me on that, but every
25 nuclear power station at present, nuclear facility has a

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1 pool in which they keep this material. That is far more
2 difficult to regulate, far more difficult to guard
3 against terrorism or accident than having all the
4 material transported into one place where it is buried
5 underground.

6 There are over a hundred sites where nuclear
7 material is being kept in -- let's just call them
8 swimming pools, something of that size roughly, far more
9 difficult to regulate and guard, and, therefore, the
10 danger from terrorism at present is far higher than if it
11 was all buried in one place.

12 With regards the gentleman who belongs to the

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13 Indian community in that area, he says he has not been
14 informed. The amount of information that has been made
15 available and has been published is enormous. You
16 cannot, of course, force a horse to drink when you lead
17 him to the trough. If people will not learn, then you
18 cannot teach them. Nevertheless, the information is out
19 there, nothing has been kept secret.

20 There have been some areas, and I must admit,
21 when I was there, I severely criticized some of the
22 things that had been done as regards publicity.
23 Nevertheless, the communities that exist in that area, in
24 the town of Beatty and other towns in that area, have the
25 information available and the information is basically

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1 very convincing.

2 Yucca Mountain is a better site than anywhere
3 else in the country and certainly a better site than
4 keeping all that nuclear waste in the facilities where it
5 is at present, and even more so, far better than keeping
6 it in -- I believe it's called Hanford where there is
7 some real serious contamination from the military
8 research. That material has to be stored somewhere, and,
9 therefore, to say not in my backyard, I think is

10 nationally a very poor excuse. So I am in favor of Yucca

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11 Mountain.

12 Thank you.